

CHAPTER 8

PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE



City of Liberty Lake Comprehensive Plan

A. Introduction



The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element serves two related purposes. The first purpose is to determine the type and level of park and recreational services that are desired by the residents of the Liberty Lake area. The second purpose of this element is to identify, encourage, and protect a system of trails and open space corridors in the City of Liberty Lake. The distinction between public parks and open space corridors is an important one. Open space, in this instance, includes land that may or may not be publicly owned. Open space corridors are valued for wildlife

habitat, trails, recreation, connection of critical areas, and their aesthetics. Open space corridors serve multiple purposes, including greenbelt buffers between developments. In order to ensure that the beauty of the natural environment, recreational opportunities, and the unique character of the City's residential neighborhoods continues undisturbed, the City of Liberty Lake has included this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element in its Comprehensive Plan.

Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Element Vision Statements¹

1. Additional parks, possibly one by the Spokane River
2. Additional trees and preserved natural beauty
3. Expansion of the current pedestrian friendly trail system
4. Inclusion of golf courses and other recreational opportunities within the City
5. City community center
6. Additional community access to Liberty Lake

B. History and Background

The geographical area now incorporated as the City of Liberty Lake was largely undeveloped until 1987 when construction of Meadowwood, a planned community consisting of 2300 residences, a business and industrial park, a golf course, and a shopping center began. Since then, the City of Liberty Lake has evolved into a thriving, family oriented community. The Liberty Lake community is widely known for its parks, trail system, and golf courses. We have over 400 acres of passive and active recreational property within the City and Liberty Lake has become a premier golfing destination.



Golf Course Descriptions



The three public golf courses within the City of Liberty Lake offer golfers a variety of choices in course design and playing conditions, all immaculately maintained and priced competitively with other courses in the Spokane area. The scenic hillsides, uncrowded surroundings, easy access, and availability of tee-times, even on short notice, make Liberty Lake a premier golfing locale.

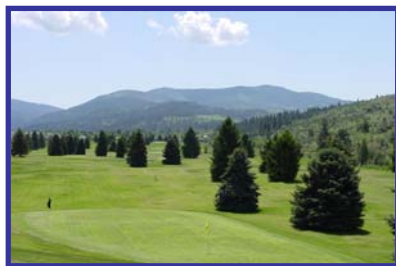
¹ Vision Statements were created by the Planning Commission and City Council to reflect citizen comments.

MeadowWood Golf Course is the newest of the three courses located within the City, and due to the numerous tournaments that are held there each year, it is likely the most well known. At a 71.4 course rating and a slope score of 130, it is designed to be challenging even to the experienced golfer, but accommodates less accomplished golfers with multiple tees and fairway yardage displays. The Scottish Links style course wraps gracefully around the City's pleasant, well maintained neighborhoods, yet its large number of lakes and sand traps make it comparable in appearance and difficulty to many "country club" courses. A driving range and friendly, full service proshop and restaurant complete the "country club" experience.



Liberty Lake Golf Course is the oldest course and is particularly popular with golfers in the mid-handicap range due to the open, forgiving layout of the rough, but with a course rating of 68.7 and a slope score of 118, it is challenging enough for the more avid golfer as well. It is easy and pleasurable to walk the course, which is relatively flat, but also contains newly rebuilt greens that are significantly larger than those of other courses. This course has a mixture of open and treed holes, and some holes with a water feature. Playing conditions are very good, and the full service clubhouse offers all the extras golfers in Liberty Lake have come to expect.

Trailhead at Liberty Lake, the new City golf course, formerly known as ValleyView, is an executive nine-hole course with the quality and amenities that discerning golfers expect of such a course. Built in 1973, it was the only mid-length executive course in the Northwest, however it does offer two sets of tees, giving golfers the option of playing 18 different holes. Trailhead is designed with regular length par 3's and shorter par 4 holes. The beautiful blue spruce trees that line the fairways, a small pond in the middle of the course, and the relatively early afternoon shade makes it a pleasant course to play, even in the middle of summer. The City recently purchased the course and is diligently working to restore it to its original pristine condition. The relatively flat course appeals to beginners, advanced beginners, and golfers who don't have the time to play a full round of 18 holes. It also offers a grass driving range for golfers who want to hone their skills in a realistic setting.



Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Inventory

Currently, the City of Liberty Lake contains Pavillion Park and three golf courses which total 346.6 acres as well as our existing residential open/ common space which totals 49.1 acres. (including the private common areas listed below). The following Figure 8.1 is an inventory of the public parks, private parks, recreation, and major open space areas within the City of Liberty Lake. The Greenacres Landfill Reclamation Site that is identified as Open Space / Recreation on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map is not included within the inventory because as a reclamation site it is not useable for 50 years from the date it was designated, which is outside of the 20 year planning horizon. The site including the buffer area totals 57.8 acres and is contained within a residential plat.



FIGURE 8.1 - PARKS & OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

DESCRIPTION	NAME	ADDRESS
OPEN SPACE	LIBERTY LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PLAY FIELD)	23606 E. BOONE AVE.
PUBLIC PARK	PAVILLION PARK	CORNER MOLTER & COUNTRY VISTA
OPEN SPACE	OPEN SPACE IN THE MEADOWS (ASSOCIATION COMMON AREA)	CORNER OF SINTO & MALVERN
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	PUMP HOUSE PARK IN LIBERTY LANDING (ASSOCIATION COMMON AREA)	CORNER OF BOONE & SIMPSON
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	LITTLE BEAR PARK IN THE GARDENS (ASSOCIATION COMMON AREA)	CORNER OF GARRY & BROADWAY
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	FIVE FINGERS PARK IN THE COTTAGES (ASSOCIATION COMMON AREA)	OFF HOMESTEAD & COUNTRY VISTA
OPEN SPACE	PLAYGROUND IN BIG TROUT (PRIVATE COMMON AREA)	OFF COUNTRY VISTA
OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	TRAILHEAD AT LIBERTY LAKE (CITY GOLF COURSE)	1102 N. LIBERTY LAKE RD.
OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	MEADOWWOOD GOLF COURSE (COUNTY GOLF COURSE)	24501 E. VALLEYWAY
OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	LIBERTY LAKE GOLF COURSE (COUNTY GOLF COURSE)	24403 E. SPRAGUE
PUBLIC TRAIL	CENTENNIAL TRAIL	MULTIPLE
PUBLIC TRAIL	LIBERTY LAKE TRAIL SYSTEM	MULTIPLE
OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	SPORTS WORLD (PRIVATE SOFTBALL FIELDS)	OFF MISSION AVE.
OPEN SPACE	VARIOUS COMMON AREA TRACTS	MULTIPLE

C. Goals and Policies

General Goals and Policies



The residents of the City of Liberty Lake and surrounding communities value the long-term benefits of parks and recreation. It is important to retain the connection with the outdoors, provide for passive and active recreational activities, and avoid the visual monotony of crowded and undifferentiated structures. These general goals will be fulfilled by encouraging the development of, maintaining, and/or preserving a network of parks, trails, and open space.

Goal

P.1: Ensure the availability of a variety of parks, recreation facilities and services, and open space to benefit a wide range of age, social, economic, and special group interests and abilities.

Policies

P.1.1: Develop, maintain, and utilize a detailed Liberty Lake Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The plan should be updated at least every 5 years or sooner if conditions alter the effectiveness of the existing plan and shall:

1. Identify existing parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities;
2. Identify the need for future parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities and where they may be located;
3. Identify and prioritize strategies to meet level of service standards identified in the Comprehensive Plan;
4. Identify funding sources necessary to meet the level of service standard and maintain public parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities and services;
5. Ascertain the economic feasibility of all new public parks, trails, open space, and recreational facilities.

P.1.2: Development of new parks, recreation, and open space facilities, whether public or private, shall be consistent with the City of Liberty Lake's Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Plan or other plans as adopted.

P.1.3: Park and recreation facilities should serve the widest possible cross-section of citizen needs and interests, including handicap accessibility where possible.

P.1.4: Parks, recreation, and open space facilities should be located where they will provide for a variety of activities, as well as where they will best preserve, enhance, and protect important habitat areas, corridors and linkages, natural amenities (e.g., wetlands and shorelines), unique landscape features (e.g., cliffs and bluffs), or other outstanding natural features.

P.1.5: Allocate parks, recreation, and open space facilities throughout the City in a manner that provides an equitable geographic distribution based on population density.

P.1.6: Respond to the diversity of public needs by offering a range of recreational opportunities from passive to active, and from unstructured activity to organized recreation.

P.1.7: Involve the public and other agencies with expertise in the decision making process regarding parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs.

P.1.8: Ensure the public has access to any lake, stream, or river that may fall within the City, within the carrying-capacity limits of the water resources and adjacent natural systems.

Goal

P.2: Develop, or encourage the development of, parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the public.

Policies

P.2.1: Coordinate and cooperate with both public and private sector interests to further park and recreational opportunities.

P.2.2: Work with nonprofit and for-profit recreation providers to enhance the quality and quantity of available recreation facilities at the lowest possible expense to the taxpayer.

Level of Service for Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreational Facilities

Purpose: The residents of the City of Liberty Lake and surrounding communities desire to preserve the variety and convenience of the recreational opportunities, as well as the

uncluttered and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere of their communities made possible by the variety and abundance of open space, trails, and the parks, both public and private, within the City of Liberty Lake. In order to ensure that future residents enjoy the same benefits of abundant parks, recreation, and open space, a minimum level of service should be maintained.

Goal

P.3: Set a minimum level of service for parks, trails, and open space of 30 acres per 1000 population, inclusive of golf courses, natural areas, school play areas, and other outdoor recreational areas.

Policies

P.3.1: Offer neighborhoods within the City the ability to increase park and recreation opportunities through privately owned neighborhood parks.

P.3.2: New development shall mitigate all of its direct impacts of development on public parks, recreation, and open space facilities by dedicating land in the form of parks, trails, or other open space, inclusive of golf courses, natural areas, school play areas, and other outdoor recreational areas.

P.3.3: Parks, trails, and other open spaces designed to mitigate development impacts shall be within maximum specified distances from all locations within the development.

P.3.4: City owned recreation facilities should be designed and operated to recover operating costs. Any adopted fee structure policies should be based on the cost of providing service.

P.3.5: Encourage innovative strategies and incentives (e.g., adopt-a-park, adopt-a-trail, adopt-a-space) to enhance existing programs for park maintenance, safety, and accessibility.

Park Maintenance and Design

Purpose: It is important that the City maintain existing parks, recreation, and open space to ensure safety, security, and cleanliness. Well-designed parks and connecting trails will contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the City as well as the welfare, safety, and security of its citizens.

Goal

P.4: Continue to provide a parks and trail system that is well maintained and effectively managed to meet both current and future needs.

Policies

P.4.1: Maintenance of existing parks, recreation, and open space facilities shall take precedence over acquisition of new facilities.

P.4.2: Design standards for parks, recreation, and open space should ensure safety, security, cleanliness, accessibility and ease of maintenance.

P.4.3: Best management practices should be utilized in the design of city parks, recreation, and open space facilities.

P.4.4: Parks, recreation, and open space should be designed and located to provide ease of access for pedestrians, handicapped persons, bicycles, autos, and public transit.

P.4.5: To the greatest extent possible, retain the natural features of proposed parks and recreation areas. Encourage designs that incorporate the use of native plants and grasses.

P.4.6: Ensure safe trails and/or bike lanes are developed along new arterials.

Open Space Goals and Policies

Open space contributes directly and indirectly to the economic value of nearby property and to the economic value of the community by enhancing its attractiveness to existing and prospective individual and commercial residents. Open space includes trails, meadows, golf courses, public and non-public parks, and recreational playing fields associated with schools. The purpose of this section is to provide a policy framework to preserve the open space areas that function as a system of corridors so that opportunities for recreation, trails, wildlife habitat, and connection of critical areas are maintained.

Purpose

To preserve and create viable natural habitat and trail corridors integrated with and whenever possible, connected to, a well-distributed system of neighborhood, community and regional parks designed to enhance the quality of life by providing recreational opportunity, preserving open space, and protecting important elements of Liberty Lake's great natural heritage for future generations.

Goal

P.5: Preserve and protect existing and designated open space areas and corridors throughout the City to maintain a physical and functional system of open space corridors which protect environmental resources, enhance visual aesthetics, provide circulation linkages, and ensure adequate separation and buffers between various land uses.

Policies

P.5.1: Monitor change in open space quantity and quality to evaluate the cumulative impacts on the existing system of open space over time, and take the necessary steps to ensure open space is protected.

P.5.2: Encourage private efforts to acquire property and/or secure easements or development rights for open space, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

P.5.3: Develop revenue sources for the funding of open space. Funding sources may include, but are not limited to, impact fees.

P.5.4: Where appropriate, conserve existing public lands in a natural state through careful planning and cooperative agreements between government agencies and public and private groups.

P.5.5: Through planning, open space corridors shall be established as appropriate to serve as greenbelt buffers, trails, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas between and among developments.

P.5.6: Identify and designate open space areas and corridors throughout the City. These open spaces shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.

P.5.7: The open space designations must be based on community needs and values over time, as population increases.

P.5.8: Public Open Space designations must be accompanied with funding, planning, and acquisition techniques that reasonably ensure the land will be available for open space methods of retention, such as the following:

1. Conservation Futures Tax
2. Conservation Easements
3. Land Trust
4. Transfer of Development Rights
5. Public Acquisition of property
6. Private acquisition
7. Donation
8. Planned Development/ Clustering
9. Dedication
10. Impact Fees
11. Golf Course Admissions Tax

P.5.9: Establish a public process consistent with the City of Liberty Lake's Parks Plan or other plans as adopted, for prioritizing future park and open space land acquisitions. The acquisition policy should be flexible enough to permit the capture of an unanticipated opportunity.

P.5.10: Solicit involvement by the general public, agencies, and individuals with expertise in open space land acquisition decisions.

P.5.11: Encourage the preservation of open space by nonprofit organizations and private individuals.

P.5.12: Encourage the retention of all publicly owned open space areas.

P.5.13: Respect private property rights while preserving open space corridors through regulatory means.

P.5.14: Implement the open space designation through zoning and other regulatory techniques such as residential clustering, critical area buffers, and wildlife management plans to provide an open space system and to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

P.5.15: Promote the inclusion of maintained open space within planned unit developments for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

P.5.16: Established view corridors throughout the City shall be maintained and, whenever possible, enhanced.

Trails Goals and Policies

Purpose: The City of Liberty Lake's trail system is utilized for both recreational and transportation purposes. While the trail system is a significant component of the City's parks, recreational, and open space facilities, it is the backbone of the City's pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle traffic plan and as such is fully addressed in the Transportation Element of this plan. To the extent that the trail system contributes to the recreational opportunities found in the City, it is addressed in this element as well.

Goals

P.6a: Create a system of multipurpose trails that meet present and projected recreational needs and connects with the regional system of such trails at multiple, convenient locations.

P.6b: Make the enhancement of the existing trail system plan a priority project.

Policies

P.6.1: Ensure trails are handicap accessible.

P.6.2: Prepare and maintain a recreational enhancements program for the trails plan. The trails plan should link population centers, community facilities, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, open space, and cultural/ historical areas. Coordinate with other agencies and trails committee(s) to ensure a comprehensive approach to trail system planning.

P.6.3: Separate recreational trails from motorized vehicle traffic where feasible.

P.6.4: Inventory and examine existing rights-of-way (including abandoned rail and utility easements) for possible use as multipurpose non-motorized vehicle trails.